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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/BSC, L, PM

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: MOVING FORWARD WITH BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE ON SHOOTDOWN

REF: A. SECSTATE 54183

[1](#)B. 07 BRASILIA 1868

[1](#)C. STATE 57700

[1](#)D. 07 STATE 17940

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Lisa Kubiske for reason 1.5 (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On July 8, 2008, Defense Attache, Air Force Attache, and Poloff had an initial high-level meeting with Brazilian Air Force generals, Tenente Brigadeiro Paulo Roberto Rohrig de Britto (the number two general in the Brazilian Air Force), Brigadierio Egito, and Colonel Roque to discuss Brazil's Air Bridge Denial (ABD or Shootdown) program and ways to move forward to ensure this year's Presidential Determination process goes smoothly. The primary purpose of the meeting was to open a line of communication and build confidence with General Britto, who is new to the issue, and to attempt to elicit suggestions from the Brazilians on how we could reach an accommodation that was satisfactory for both parties, but met Ref A objectives.

[1](#)2. (C) After Air Force Attache discussed the need to comply with US legal requirements that compel us to certify that Brazil has in place adequate safety policies and procedures, Defense Attache noted that the best way to build confidence and ensure transparency was to have a frank exchange of ideas. Defense Attache noted that these are legal obligations and that it is in the best interest of both parties to find a way to move forward. He further noted that there are ways to do this without being intrusive, by for example having an exchange of air traffic control personnel from both countries who could share knowledge and best practices of safety procedures in executing the ABD.

[1](#)3. (C) General Britto cut right to the point and noted that "the law is the law and that the Air Force has to comply with it," in reference to the fact that the Brazilian Air Force has legal obligations with regards to having in place safety procedures. Subsequently, Britto asked his staff to provide us with copies of all legislation and procedures relating Brazil's ABD program. Regarding an exchange of personnel, he did not fully commit to the idea, but nodded in the affirmative. He also suggested we should all meet in the next week or so to have a more substantive discussion on the issue.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: It was a positive initial meeting with General Britto and his staff. That he did not outright refuse to consider an exchange of personnel is a positive indication that we may be able to continue exploring that possibility, which would provide us with important insight into Brazil's ABD program at all levels of the decision-execution chain. Furthermore, before we had a chance to ask for them, General Britto volunteered to pass on

to us all legal and policy materials related to Brazil's ABD program. Our expectation is that this will include safety procedures that are in place, something which, although we have knowledge of through numerous visits and conversations with personnel who participate at various levels in the ABD program, we currently lack in a formal written manner. Finally, the General invited us to continue the dialogue in a second meeting with him in the next few weeks. This will be a good opportunity to outline our specific concerns while simultaneously eliciting ideas from Britto that dovetail neatly with our objectives. Although we think this was a good start, we should have a better sense whether we have found a way to move forward in a more positive and productive fashion than in years past after we meet with them again soon. End Comment.

SOBEL